The Commonweal

May 25, 1951

The Russian People

Are they allies in the fight for freedom?

NICHOLAS S. TIMASHEFF

Leon Bloy: Master of Paradox

RAISSA MARITAIN

Christianity in the Orient

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

The Strategy of Freedom

AT A time when the investigating committees of Congress were proving their devotion to the democratic principle of free inquiry even to the extent of laying at *Pravda's* door documents formerly of a top-secret nature relating to the national security, Prime Minister Nehru found it necessary, in the interest of Indian state-security, to introduce into Parliament a bill designed to restrict the individual's freedom of expression in that country. His is an action that to the American way of thinking can be full of peril, even as a means of combatting subversion, as Nehru intends it; we have been so reluctant to restrict freedom of expression here that we have not yet been willing to suppress a clearly subversive political party, even though our civil freedom and our national security have never before been so imperilled.

If, on this score of freedom of information and expression, the present investigation has given us reason to believe that the country is holding fast to its essential national beliefs, on another score the investigation has perhaps given us some reason to be not so sure. We have reference to the long-standing American principle in respect of foreign relations according to which, so far as the United States is concerned, every nation has a right to its own form of government; for this reason the US has often proclaimed it to be a matter of policy not to interfere in the internal affairs of another country.

Now, however, from what the MacArthur-Marshall testimony has revealed, there seems to be agreement that the island of Formosa cannot be allowed to go Communist, even, apparently, if the eight million Formosans should vote allegiance to Red China. It has been decided that a Communist Formosa would be so prejudicial to American interests that we have, in effect, decided to limit the freedom of choice of the Formosan people if that becomes necessary. On the international level, we are, then, apparently ready to impose, for reasons of security, a restriction on another people's freedom of expression similar to what Prime Minister Nehru hopes to impose in India on a national level for reasons of security.

But what, in this event, becomes of the American tradition of respecting another country's right to choose freely and for itself its own form of government—assuming that the Formosans might want to join Red China? It appears that on the island of Formosa a point of international impasse has been reached between the Communist and non-Communist ideologies, so that on the political level there appears to be no solution, no possible political compromise with international Communism on the question of who shall have Formosa. So fundamental is the disagreement with Soviet Communism that it may be that we shall have to abandon for the time being one of the basic principles of American democracy regarding the rights of other nations. Red China has said it will take Formosa; we are saying that Red China will not be allowed to have Formosa under any conditions. When a political impasse like this is reached, recourse is frequently had to war, which is often called the extension of politics through violent means. It would appear from all this that the point of inevitable and all-out conflict is approaching.

It is well to remember, before we take conflict for granted, that this present situation in the world is not an entirely new one. Nazi Germany, too, reached a point beyond which the other nations would not permit her to expand, and from the devastating war that resulted, the American people emerged with one firm conviction about the future. We decided then that if we were to prevent war from happening again, we could not again retreat into isolationism; we had learned as a result of hard experience that there was only one way to prevent or to defeat totalitarian aggression, and that was through a system of collective security. We said then that we were convinced that in the future it would have to be one world or none.

IT was the United States that was largely responsible for calling the United Nations into existence and when we did so, we did not look on the UN as a perfect international assemblage nor did we expect it to solve all our problems. But of this much we were fairly certain: we felt that the great majority of nations had had enough of totalitarianism, and that if they had a chance to vote for or against it, the overwhelming majority would vote with us against totalitarianism. As things went in the UN, that is exactly what happened; Russia and her satellites sat alone against the world. Here, we felt, was the only political means, the only way short of war, of stopping

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Russian Communism through the collective moral authority of the majority of the nations of the world. Here, we thought, was the best means available of proving that the free life had a superior appeal in the minds and hearts of mankind at large.

WHEN the UN went to the aid of Korea, these feelings were never at a higher pitch. But now, as you read the record of the present Congressional investigation, you sense the resentment that some Senators have toward the UN, a resentment that has grown up because our allies in the UN could not agree with General MacArthur's ideas on extending the Korean war. Some of the General's supporters tend now to look on the UN as a feeble and cowardly body of appeasers, and there is, of course, a loud and influential section of the American press that never lets a day go by without abusing the UN in some way or other. It has even been suggested that we might "go it alone." What this means is that we will be rejecting the very thing we had to fight World War II to learn —which is, that we cannot go it alone in the modern world.

When our allies urged us to limit the war in Korea, most of them did so not out of motives of appeasement, but out of a desire to remind us of something that we were in danger of forgetting; they asked us to remember that the United Nations is a body working for collective security, not just the security of one nation, and they feared that if we were to become too deeply involved in China, the world-wide structure of collective security was likely to collapse before all of us had had a real chance to build up our collective defenses as deterrents to aggression, especially in Europe and the Middle East.

When the President and his advisers decided to heed the advice of our allies, he was roundly abused for this because, it was said, the President made a political decision, not a military decision. As General MacArthur remarked, "war's very object is victory"—and this would seem to call for maximum force in Korea. But that is only part of the truth. War calls for something else besides victory. War calls for a political objective beyond military victory. As Hanson Baldwin has put it: "most of the great military theorists for centuries, and this nation's military schools of today — notably the National War College — have taught consistently that a war is largely meaningless unless it has objectives beyond victory — ultimate political objectives." We have, in other words, to realize the folly of unlimited war as we have already learned the illusion of unconditional surrender as the objective of war.

It was in order to save our ultimate political objectives that the President made his decision to limit the war in Korea. For it is clear now that if a problem such as Formosa is to be resolved short of atomic world war, and if the United States is to be able to respect the sovereignty of foreign nations — and to mean what it says—then there is only one place where this can be done, and that is in the United Nations or some such organization, where the collective moral and material strength of the majority of nations still has a chance to prevent world war and to prove itself stronger than totalitarian slavery. What we are really fighting for is the survival of these moral and political objectives at the heart of the free life. If these principles survive, the UN will have a right to hold such territories as Formosa in trusteeship, safeguarding human rights until a final settlement is made; under these conditions the free world has nothing to fear as to what the Formosans will choose.

This is what the President's overall political objective is, and this is what his decision was meant to achieve. We trust that his courage in making that decision and in keeping collective security intact will in time be richly rewarded.

• NEXT WEEK •

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN writes from Belgrade on the state of the Yugoslav defenses.

"Practically none of the Yugoslav officers is of the pre-war Yugoslav Army. Ninety-three percent belong to the Communist Party and to the hard core of veterans at that; they learned how to fight and how to lead their men during the difficult struggle against the Germans. Some of them later received a thorough theoretical training in the high Russian Frunze and Voroshilov military academies. For them Marxism is the only reality."

Anglo-Iranian Crisis

WHEN one considers the importance of the partnership of the United States with the British Commonwealth for the defenses against Soviet aggression, the present Iranian oil crisis stands out in its true proportions. For thus far America and Britain fail to see eye-to-eye.

The urgency of the situation is all too plain. The new Iranian Premier, Dr. Mossadegh, who came to power on a wave of popular demand for nationalization of the country's oil facilities, after fainting at the rostrum, now cowers in his refuge in the Iranian Parliament Building. He claims that his life is threatened (one of his immediate predecessors was assassinated a few weeks back for opposing nationalization). He accuses the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company of plotting against his life. Deputies of his National Front Party are standing watch to guard him day and night. Dr. Mossadegh refuses to leave the sanctuary of Parliament until nationalization has been completed.

In Britain Herbert Morrison has thrust aside other duties to prepare a new note to Iran affirming Britain's determination to resist unilateral expropriation. Over three thousand special British parachute troops, who might be able to defend the giant Abadan refinery—if not the wells themselves—have been alerted for possible despatch.

Tension is acute in a land notorious for political corruption and the

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worst extremes of wealth and poverty. The Iranian masses are aroused. Britain is the symbol of years of popular oppression. If the Government does not actually take over the half-billion-dollar oil-producing facilities, mobs, organized and egged on by native Communists, may seek to storm the Abadan refinery and other works. Some 2,500 British subjects in the area would be in grave personal danger if the shaky Iranian authorities permit things to get out of hand. British parachutists would have lives as well as property to save.

Yet the British realize fully that armed intervention for this purpose might well give Russia the pretext she has long been seeking to send her own troops and advance toward oilfields she has long needed and coveted. The fact that the 1921 treaty provides for Russian intervention only if Iran were to be used as a base for operations against Russia is a nicety about which there need be no illusions. Hossein Maki, secretary of the new committee of the Iranian Parliament charged with taking over the Anglo-Iranian properties, stresses this point. He asserts that British refusal to hand things over would mean the "beginning of the Third World War."

What should American policy be at this critical juncture? The outcome in Iran will have repercussions in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and other lands that constitute our own foreign oil resources. Not only would British loss of access to Iran oil be an irreparable blow to our principal ally, but it might impair the whole keystone, Western Europe. And if Soviet Russia should succeed in aggravating this explosive situation and in taking over the oil fields herself, eventually, she might develop enough fuel resources there for a protracted major war.

Thus far the one American step reported has been to ask for a delay. Ambassador Henry F. Grady has proposed that Iran take no action pending a report of a mixed commission. In general we feel far less apprehensive about nationalization or higher royalty fees than the British. We seek some kind of peaceful settlement. We think the time has passed for a "firm stand" to impress the natives of Iran and other restive colonials. We oppose intervening to save lives and property in the traditional imperialist manner.

All emphasis should be on negotiation. This might mean a preliminary agreement on Britain's part to concede nationalization. It might even mean, to calm the passions of the moment, a transition complement of American engineers. The object here would be to forestall either a suspension of operations or the introduction of Russian technicians. It would be done in a way that would assure the British of a continuing supply of oil, and only with full British consent. It could not serve as a blind for supplanting British by American interests.

American effort should be focused on bringing about disinterested mediation and friendly negotiation. For the British still have much to bargain with. Besides the ominous threat of armed intervention there are millions in unpaid oil royalties of which the Iran Government is in the direst need. An orderly and gradual withdrawal from the oilfields would permit continuing and profitable operation of the facilities and the training of native technicians. A peaceful settlement would ward off a Soviet intervention that would envelop Iran behind the Iron Curtain.

The stakes could hardly be higher. If an Anglo-American development of the Point IV type could be coupled with the oil settlement, that pact would have a chance of lasting for some years.

UN Development Agency?

THE United Nations organization has not been making the front page for weeks. Disillusionment and concentration on other things have led Americans to relegate the UN to the background.

The first and perhaps the greatest disillusionment came during the first UN sessions. Day after day the Soviet delegates sought to direct attention from Russian expansion by raising false issues and obstructing any real decisions. The hopes aroused in many minds at San Francisco were soon dashed.

After several years of UN doldrums the Security Council revived the hopes of many by taking advantage of a Soviet "walk" and decreeing action against the invading North Koreans. Hopes for collective security soared as the UN forces stemmed the march of the invader and gradually pushed him back toward the Yalu. But the Chinese Communists put an end to all that. UN prestige suffered.

Then General MacArthur failed to mention the UN in his historic Washington address and much of the discussion in the subsequent debates and testimony of the generals presented the Korean campaign as an American operation. When questioning brought out that the United States was supplying all but 30,000 of the non-Korean forces on our side, it darkened the oblivion into which the UN has been cast for most of us.

The sanctions against China which are currently up for UN action may accomplish a little in the way of rejuvenation, but the program which has just been suggested by five United Nations economists looks a good deal more promising. It is not directly a political measure. It has already been sharply challenged, and UNESCO has yet to accept it. But the economists' plan attacks head-on the basic causes of many political difficulties. They have worked out a convincing program.

Their objective is a steady improvement of living standards in the underdeveloped countries of the globe. Their plan would give the Point IV idea a UN rather than a primarily American character. Fear of American imperialism in these areas would thereby be largely eliminated.

Moreover each recipient country would be expected to contribute materially to its own development. It has also been suggested that if such UN aid would tend to strengthen the hold of a dictatorial regime upon an unwilling people, it would be withheld. Certain minimum freedoms would be required to qualify a nation to participate. The economists' proposal looks like a happy extension of the whole Point IV idea.

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Willie McGee

AT LAUREL, Mississippi on May 9th a man died in the state's portable electric chair. Later the same day in Paris the Assembly of the French Union halted its activities to observe a minute of silence in his honor. The man was an obscure thirty-seven year old Negro whose name was Willie McGee.

Fifteen or twenty years ago the case of Willie McGee would probably have occasioned demonstrations on college campuses, protest meetings all over the country, and engaged the attention of dozens of writers and poets ready to use their prestige and their talents to rouse public opinion in his favor. Even that name, Willie McGee, smacks of the bitter poetry, the song and literature of social protest. But such is the present temper in the United States, that his death meant less here than in Paris.

True, the Communists vigorously espoused McGee's cause, but their support nowadays is rather a kiss of death. Still no other group, no other leadership has arisen to give shape and meaning and focus to the spirit of protest, the outrage that surely must exist, in regard to a case like McGee's, or that of the Martinsville Seven, under all the apparent conformity. Senator McCarthy, for one, has articulated the smoldering resentments of the extreme right, but no personal figure or group has yet appeared which seems capable of voicing the sentiment on the left. The Communists and fellow travelers have been so thoroughly and rightfully discredited that no decent American wants to have any share in their crocodile tears and phony indignations.

If the "radical" spirit had been articulated more would have been heard about the McGee case; feeling about his death would surely have run at least as high here as in France. But outside the Communist Party, those broad sympathies and dispositions which might be described as "leftist" are now amorphous, without focus. It seems that Senator Taft and President Truman represent the true extremes of opinion, yet in the United States, surely political orthodoxy has wider range than that. Have we reached the stage where the extremes of collegiate radicalism, for instance, will only go as far as a straight Democrat ticket? I hope not. Whatever an American's political loyalties, he must acknowledge the debt we all owe to the non-conformist and "radical." Yesterday's radicalism is tomorrow's conservatism, and without a thriving radicalism today, we will be left with no direction to go but backward.

The absence of any full-scale public reaction to the Willie McGee case pointed up this situation for me. McGee was condemned to die after three jury trials in Mississippi. The first two findings were reversed by the State Supreme Court because of legal technicalities. The third went unchallenged—by the higher courts, that is. Three times the U. S. Supreme Court refused the case. But until the very end there were appeals made to the local District Court, the Governor of Mississippi and the President on behalf of Willie McGee. As with the Martinsville case, letters and protests poured in from all over the nation and the world. McGee's death was reported on page 29 of the New York *Times* but in Paris all the afternoon papers, not only the Communist *L'Humanité,* headlined it. *Combat,* an anti-Communist but leftist newspaper wrote: "The Mississippi executioner has won out over the world conscience. . . . Yesterday morning a little of the liberty of all men and a little of the solidarity between the peoples died with Willie McGee."

A reporter for the New York *Post* described vividly the scene at Laurel on the night of the execution. A white crowd had gathered and waited in silence until the word came through that the switch had been pulled and Willie McGee was dead. There were no Negroes to be seen on the street. Willie McGee and his spiritual adviser, a colored minister, were the only Negroes participating in the drama.

McGee, the reporter wrote, went to the chair with great dignity and poise. It was only a matter of a few minutes before the signal was given to the silent watchers outside. An official went to the window and the crowd, when it was sure Willie McGee was dead, gave a loud, piercing rebel yell. Then there was quiet and order again. The crowd broke up and the people of Laurel returned to their homes. The body of Willie McGee was released from the chair and preparations for burial begun.

So ended a long five and a half years of trials and bitter disputes about the guilt of Willie McGee and the justice of his sentence. Supporters of McGee contended that he was the victim of perjured testimony and had never been given a chance to tell his whole story in court. Until the last his lawyers argued that the sentence at best represented "unequal application because of race." No white man has ever been executed because of rape by the state of Mississippi.

Innocent or guilty, Willie McGee is dead now and like the Martinsville Seven, his name is a symbol of racist "justice" in many places in the world where racism is deeply, religiously hated, not alone in the Communist countries where, of course, cases like this are exploited as the best kind of anti-US propaganda.

There may have been a time when the free world was tolerant of racist behavior in the United States and inclined merely to look the other way when it expressed itself with particular malice—as in the matter of dispensing two kinds of "justice" and measuring the nature of the crime by the color of the criminal. There may have been such a time, but now it is passed.

Now there is the dark memory of Hitlerism, still very much alive. There is the memory of the concentration camps and the furnaces. There is the sure knowledge that it might just as easily be any race, any nationality, any human abstraction as any other. There is the long anger of Europe and the memory of twelve million dead "inferior" Jews and Poles, to keep it smoldering. And the way the Europeans see a case like Willie McGee's—well, it's the same old South.

JOHN COGLEY.

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The Russian People

Our propaganda should distinguish sharply between the Communist regime and the Russian nation.

By NICHOLAS S. TIMASHEFF

IN HIS encyclical on Atheistic Communism, Pope Pius XI made a distinction between the Communist rulers of Russia, whom he condemned, and the Russian people, whom he loved as good Christians. It was necessary to put the matter that way to the Catholic world since in those days many Christians were ignorant of the real facts and were inclined to believe that not only the Communists but the Russian people had committed apostasy. This was not true; religion, however hard-pressed it was, had survived in the hearts of many.

In our day, it is timely to emphasize the opposition between the Communist rulers of Russia and the Russian people, not only from the religious point of view but still more from the political viewpoint. With good reason, the American people are irritated by the actions of the Communist government of Russia, which forces the United States to make decisions it dislikes. America is a peace-loving nation, but it has been forced to rearm. The American youth would like to study or work; but instead they will have to spend two or more years in barracks. Americans hate to increase taxes to a level that may become a hindrance to the further development of their productive forces; they hate rising prices; but they have to raise the taxes because they have to guard against inflation. All these regrettable developments have been obviously caused by the Communist government of Russia, and hatred for that government is easily transferred to the nation it governs.

There are many symptoms of that process. In reports about the meetings of the UN, Vishinsky and the others are often called Russian delegates and the anger against them is projected against the nation they are supposed to represent. More and more frequently it is emphasized that, after all, Soviet aggression is nothing else but a revival of Czarist aggressiveness. The despotism of the Communist rulers provokes righteous indignation among Americans; but the present-day trend is to represent this despotism as another version of Czarist despotism. In March, *Life* reproduced excerpts from de Custine's story of his trip to Russia in 1839, during the reign of Emperor Nicholas I, one of the most autocratic rulers of Russia. A number of similarities between then and now can easily be established, and the obvious implication is that despotism is an unchangeable feature of Russia. The excerpts were accompanied by a reproduction of cartoons drawn in 1854 by G. Doré presenting, in a deliberately distorted form, Russia's history as a sequence of horrors, stupidity and defeats. This reproduction could mean only one thing: we must not only hate the aggressive and despotic-minded Russians but also despise them. In April, de Custine's book appeared in complete translation with an introduction by General Walter Bedell Smith, our former ambassador to Russia, who had "discovered" that book previously when he was writing *My Three Years in Moscow*.

Does this trend serve America's best interests, not to speak of justice? Very obviously, it does not. In the gigantic struggle of the free world against Communism, the Russian people could and should be an ally of the free world and not an obedient servant of Communist despotism. And one can show that this would not be out of the question, but under one obvious condition: and that is, that the United States and the other free nations tell the Russians that they love them and want them to be free, happy and independent. If, on the contrary, hatred and contempt are displayed, this attitude will be used by the Communists to strengthen their position among the people under their dominance. They will say to the Russians: you see, you can live under Communist rule or not at all—because the outside world is hostile and dreams of humiliating and destroying you.

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WHAT, however, are the reasons for believing that the Russians could be made allies of the free world? Have they not been entirely duped for thirty years by ruthless propaganda and made to be only Soviet robots? One can demonstrate that the Russians have not been duped and would be willing to join the free world.

In the course of the war, when Communist

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vigilance was somewhat weakened, quite a few Russian authors, poets, composers and men of science used the opportunity to depart from the models imposed on them by the government and, in the true spirit of freedom, said or produced or composed what they believed to be right or beautiful. Later on, many were rebuked or purged. Many had to recant, sometimes after long resistance, a resistance almost heroic under the conditions of the police state. The universities of Moscow and Leningrad were courageous enough to convoke public meetings during which men of science demonstrated the ignorance and stupidity of the promoters of the "official truth."

But the spirit of freedom has survived not only among the intellectuals. Younger DP's have often been asked whether, after all, they believed what they were told by the agencies of propaganda. Their story has almost invariably been the same. No, they would say; Soviet propaganda defeats itself because what it tells the people is known to be false. The people are told that they are free, happy and prosperous. But they know that they are not free—if not they themselves, then their friends who participate in what is called Soviet elections know it; one would have to be a moron to believe that he is free when he is handed a single ballot, ordered to drop it into an urn and then told that he has elected his representative. One would have to be a moron to believe that the people are prosperous when one knows that his wife or mother has to stand long hours in line to acquire meager and distasteful food. One would have to be a moron to believe that he is happy when, almost without exception, he would know that his father, or elder brother, or someone else from his family had been or was in a concentration camp, perhaps died there. No, these young men who had never enjoyed that very modest freedom which existed in Russia prior to the ascent of Communism, have learned to love freedom by contrast.

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THESE stories have been fully confirmed by recent publications such as Inkeles' *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia* and Barghoorn's *The Soviet Image of the United States.* According to the former, there is a great turnover in the ranks of the "agitators;" these are persons, sometimes Communists, sometimes not, whose function is to convey the ideas of the Kremlin to the people by means of informal talks. Why the large turnover? Because, it appears, the agitators find it so hard to reconcile the directions they receive from the party with the aspirations of the people whom they have to indoctrinate. In other words, the people do not want to accept what they are told.

According to Barghoorn, the Russians have not become thoughtless robots. They are not happy about the expansionist policy of their rulers. They have not forgotten the help granted by the Americans during the war and after; they do not want to be involved in a war against America. Naturally this is not true of the small ruling *élite;* but among the intellectuals sympathy for the West is widespread, while the masses are most attracted to the democratic values of the West whenever contact is established. These statements are based on five years (1942-47) of observation in Russia, the author having been attached to the American Embassy in Moscow, and on numerous conversations with persons who left Russia after he did.

And there is also the story of the survival of religion despite more than two decades of atrocious persecution. Those who have kept their faith intact and passed it on to younger people have proven by deed that they dearly love the first of all freedoms, freedom of conscience.

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IF AND when the Russians are liberated from the Communist yoke, they will tenaciously hold on to freedom. What, however, can be done to help them? There is no way to win their freedom from tyranny in one step or in a short time. But steps in the right direction are possible. First, there are, so to speak, negative means, consisting in not doing what is so often done today. The practice of confusing the Russian people and their Communist tyrants must stop. Ascribing to the Russians the inborn traits of ominous bellicosity and aggressiveness must stop —one has only to know European history to understand that the Russians have not been more bellicose or aggressive than any other great nation; on the contrary, exact study shows that France has been involved in more wars than Russia or Germany, something which does not prevent Americans from loving the French. The assumption that the Russians could not have any government but despotism must stop — once again, this is historically untrue. If all this were understood, the language used by Americans in speaking or writing about Russia would not be offensive to the Russian people and would not offer material for Communist propaganda.

Positively, through the Voice of America and other means, the idea should be conveyed to the Russians that the Americans understand their plight and will be happy to see them free; that the Americans appreciate the great contributions made by the Russian nation to the world treasury of culture, especially in the realms of literature, music, theater and science; that an eventual war against the Soviet Union provoked by the latter's government never would be a war against the Russian nation, but that, on the contrary, the

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Russian people would be considered to be a natural and welcome ally.

In official statements about American policy, which, in various ways, reach the ears of many Russians, the distinction between the hateful Communist rule and the Russian nation must be emphasized. Without any valid reason, the Communists proclaim officially that whereas the American policy hostile to the Soviets is made by a handful of warmongers representing the interests of Wall Street, the American people, say the Communists, love the Soviet (not the Russian) people. With much better reason, the spokesmen for America must openly say, whenever the opportunity presents itself, that the hostile policy of the Soviet Union is made in the Kremlin, while we know full well that the Russian people want peace with the United States.

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FINALLY, the friendly and peaceful intentions of America should be demonstrated by deeds in what might be called the areas of indecision, i.e. in those parts of the world which have not gone Communist but might go because of misery, ignorance and despair. Actual, not verbal, help to such countries as Iran, Indo-China, Indonesia and others, where tangible aid will, by the nature of things, serve as mighty propaganda for the Americans. Through imperceptible channels, knowledge of these achievements would reach the Russians and show them that, contrary to Communist propaganda, the choice is not between life under Communism or no life at all, but between misery and serfdom under Communism and a decent life after liberation from Communism, as real allies of the free nations.

Wars are won or lost not only by guns, tanks, airplanes and A-bombs. They are also won or lost on the level of ideas animating men's actions. Correct representation of Russia's past and present, and a truly Christian love for the oppressed Russians would be an excellent and potent contribution to victory in the present conflict, a victory which, let us hope, is still possible without resorting to global war.

Lay Apostolate Congress

A WORLD Congress for the Lay Apostolate, sponsored by Italian Catholic Action, will meet in Rome October 7 to 14. The fundamental themes of the Congress are concerned with the training of the laity for the apostolate, "the urgent need of action on the part of Catholics to inaugurate a more human and Christian social order," and the responsibilities of Catholics in international life. For information address the Organizing Committee, Via della Conciliazione 1, Rome.

Leon Bloy: Master of Paradox

By RAISSA MARITAIN

E. T. DUBOIS' *Portrait of Leon Bloy* (*Sheed and Ward. $2.*) is a brief study that is important for the quality of its information, for the serenity of its judgments, rendered with sympathy and objectivity, and for its unwavering preoccupation with being just to a great author and Christian whom it is often difficult to judge fairly because of the paradoxes and oppositions, real or apparent, between his work and his behavior.

It cannot be said, as the book jacket suggests, that no one has yet written on Bloy a study as "calm and balanced," and as free both of "fascination" and of "repulsion" as that of Mrs. Dubois. Pierre Termier, Pierre van der Meer de Walcheren, Jacques Maritain, Stanislas Fumet, Johannes Jörgensen, Albert Béguin and Karl Pfleger have all succeeded in paying Bloy a tribute which is authoritative and calm yet enthusiastic—because it is possible to recognize greatness quite objectively, where greatness exists.

Mrs. Dubois herself also acknowledges the greatness of Leon Bloy, although on nearly every page she oscillates between profound admiration and disappointed astonishment when confronted by traits which seem to stand in the way of bringing the nature and exceptional life of her model to harmony and unity. Sometimes she puts forward opinions which seem to keep a weather eye on current prejudices. (I shall indicate a few of them in passing). But almost immediately she rights herself and suggests an interpretation which is more just and more profound. Beautiful texts from Bloy are cited throughout. The introduction opens with the deeply moving and significant saying of Bloy: "We do not enter Paradise tomorrow or the day after or in ten years; we enter it today if we are poor and crucified."

Bloy was a beggar, "though a Christian beggar. He liked to call himself a 'Pilgrim of the Holy Sepulchre.'" The author rightly lines up the lofty realities which held sway over the life of Leon Bloy: poverty, the Cross, devotion to Christ.

In *le Désespéré, les Histoires désobligeantes,* Mrs. Dubois finds exaggeration, a certain lack of balance. But she also quotes an appropriate explanation which raises the level of the debate. Barbey d'Aurevilly said: "Leon Bloy is a cathedral gargoyle who pours down the waters of Heaven on the good and on the wicked." And Pierre Termier, many years later, goes on to say: "A French

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cathedral. . . . As one enters it, it seems full of shadows . . . but there are chapels, wonderfully lit by sweet-smelling lamps and by crowds of candles . . . yes, the cathedral, that is the true Leon Bloy—sumptuous artist and humble penitent; terrible denouncer and compassionate intercessor; the promulgator of the absolute, the tender and indulgent friend; the magnificant singer of glory and misery, of joy and sorrow, of life and death, of justice and clemency, of faith, hope and, most of all, of charity." (*Introduction à Léon Bloy.*)

Mrs. Dubois remarks that Bloy was reproached for not having earned his own living. That is unjust; Bloy constantly worked away as a writer. If his work did not assure him an adequate living, the fault is theirs who would not listen, who would not understand. In his austere life he always worked and prayed—he was poor because of his fidelity to his calling. "He believed that he was called to a special mission which consisted of living entirely by faith, hope and the love of God." And further on, the author, after accusing Bloy of chauvinism, "in which there is no spirit of Christian charity," adds immediately: "But he cannot be judged with the mediocre; he is violent by nature and remains so all his life."

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ONE of the most profound and beautiful parts of the book deals with the role of poverty in the work of Bloy; poverty is "the central drama" which makes this work comparable "with the great prose epics of French literature." Bloy took poverty unto himself as his "divinely chosen companion." He always heroically refused to submit, for the sake of money, to standards of mediocrity or of worldly self-interest—to which many great writers have so easily bent.

Bloy "created a trilogy of suffering and poverty. First the suffering and abandonment of the poor are embodied in his magnificent literary conception, particularly the tragically beautiful figure of *La Femme Pauvre.* Next he unfolds his theme in the people of God . . . the sufferings of Israel; and lastly the sorrows of Mary . . . the tears of Our Lady of La Salette."

We know that on the subject of poverty Bloy speaks from experience. His journals are filled with the terrible ordeal of poverty and abandonment. Hence he is very close to the sufferings of all who are poor.

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"IS THERE any nation to be found," asks Bloy in *Le Sang du Pauvre,* "as poor as the Jews? O, I know that there are the bankers . . ." But those who know them "and see them without prejudice realize that they . . . have other aspects . . ." In her commentary Mrs. Dubois supposes for a moment that Bloy is concerned with seeking even in the Patriarchs the origin of the business genius of the Jews, because he gives to an admirable chapter in *Salut par les Juifs,* apropos of Abraham begging God to spare the inhabitants of Sodom, the title, "The First Jewish Speculation." How is it that she did not perceive there a touch of humor, the special humor of Leon Bloy, and a gently ironical manner of remarking that the Jewish spirit harbors other ambitions than commercial ones for its speculative genius? In general Mrs. Dubois denies her subject any sense of humor. Yet what are the two volumes of *Exegese des Lieux Communs* but a masterly example of humor—of dark humor, perhaps?

Mrs. Dubois examines very closely the thought of Bloy on the destiny of the Jews. She says that he became "the prophet of this destiny"—may we say rather that in this connection he was simply a disciple of Saint Paul? In 1892 he wrote *Le Salut par les Juifs* to answer Drumont's anti-Semitic book. It was not natural sympathy for the Jews that inspired Leon Bloy but, I should say, a supernatural sentiment, a truly Catholic impulse which made him reject the error of anti-Semitism with all his soul. (This error had yet to bring about the extermination of six million Jews with magical dispatch.) Mrs. Dubois quotes Pius XI: " 'Spiritually we are Semites,' as we are told on very high authority in the face of the most bitter persecution of the Jews that history has ever known."

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THE chapter "Our Lady of La Salette" concerns the appearance of Mary, September 19, 1846, in the village of La Salette in the French Alps, to two peasant children, Mélanie Calvat and Maximin Giraud. What is of importance in Mrs. Dubois' study is the role of that religious happening in the interior life and work of Bloy. He dedicated a great part of his life to becoming "what he called a knight of Our Lady of Sorrows and a defender of Mélanie"; and to crying out to the Christian world to heed Our Lady's call to penance.

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"MONEY is the blood of the poor," and it is the symbol of the blood of Christ, of the blood of the first Poor Man. As the sufferings of Christ overflowed in the blood of Calvary, so the sufferings of His Mother overflowed in her tears. Leon Bloy, who had such devotion to Mary, had the grace of the gift of tears. To weep at Mass, at Communion, when reading the Mystics, when a prayer was most mercifully answered, or when witnessing the charity which one poor person shows another—all that, according to those who love God, has been called the gift of tears. And surely that has nothing to do with tearful romanticism which is only sentimentality based on selfishness. Therefore it is difficult to believe that "Bloy may have inherited this tendency to weep from the Romantic movement." Could the Romantics have influenced Bloy from the days when his mother often found him as a small child weeping gently, for long periods, in silence? Natural as they were, these tears had no need of a romantic motivation. Mrs. Dubois herself remarks that Bloy "also understands . . . the eternal and redeeming significance of tears." There are the tears of Our Savior, the tears of Our Lady at La Salette. "Blessed are those who weep."

In the beautiful texts of Bloy written in 1897—forty-six years before the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi,*

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Mrs. Dubois sees proof that this poor layman, Bloy, was a precursor bent on proclaiming the admirable doctrine of the Mystical Body. And she cites—as "a magnificent vision of the unity of the creation, of the inner union between all members of the Mystical Body"—the lines of Bloy which begin: "Every man who performs an act of free will projects his person into the infinite. If he reluctantly gives a penny to a poor man, that penny goes through that poor man's hand, goes through the earth, pierces the suns, crosses the firmament, harms the universe." I leave the rest of this text to readers of Mrs. Dubois and of Leon Bloy.

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THE chapter on "the literary significance of Leon Bloy" is interesting from the special viewpoint of French literary history. Bloy believes that we must use art "in order to penetrate more deeply into the world of the spirit." Leon Bloy says of himself: "I am not an artist. I am only a pilgrim of the Holy Sepulchre." Mrs. Dubois thinks that Bloy's literary work owes its origin "in part" to the Faith, but she reproaches him with a certain tendency to individualism. Yet Bloy never professed individualism as a religious or philosophical doctrine. He has simply used his right to make personal, original, paradoxical affirmations on questions which are open.

If he believed in these instances in the justness of his views, he never experienced the pettiness of vanity; he never advanced theses contrary to the Faith or the teachings of the Church. (When he said there is no distinction between the precepts and the counsels, he understood in reality that, in spirit and through the preparation of the soul, everyone must be ready to follow God's inspiration regarding the practice of the counsels. Bloy lived indeed in the peace of his soul without having taken religious vows.) No doubt he was mistaken in particular cases about people: well, he was a man liable to error, as we all are.

As a writer his desire was to serve God by his work. *And he held that such is the duty of every writer. Every* other intention was for him mediocrity, vanity, the bourgeois spirit and nothing more. He forgave mediocrity neither in the intelligence nor in spiritual life. That is why, Mrs. Dubois says, Bloy cannot be judged by ordinary standards: "a different measure has to be applied to him. Barbey d'Aurevilly soon realized this and said to him: 'Your manner of seeing is to see in a gigantic way.'"

From the heights of the world of the absolute on which he lived, Bloy considered men and events and asserted his right to judge them according to his own measurements. "It would be quite impossible to understand him if we did not concede him this gigantic measure." He had a passion for souls to the point of wanting to give his life for them. Except for that he had very modest wishes: "He loved the quiet of his home and of the church" and the Latin language and the reading of the Fathers. And he said—not without humor—"I like trees and the imperfect subjunctive, two things incomprehensible to the bourgeois."

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IN A chapter called "The Damned" Mrs. Dubois has brought together the texts which seem incompatible with Christian generosity, the love of God and the love of souls, which are striking, at first glance, in his life and work. The Damned of Bloy, that is to say those whom he condemns, against whom his anger and his violence are aroused, are chiefly the bourgeois, all the mediocre of heart and mind, the rich of this world, priests without an interior life, writers who do not consecrate their talents to divine truth, to the glory of God, friends who have betrayed him or left out of cowardice, "the respectable woman." And he even seems sometimes to overwhelm with reproaches the victims of great catastrophes such as that of the Charity Bazaar.

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WHEN she considers subsequently, in her last chapter, the value of Bloy's work, Mrs. Dubois presents an extensive picture of great qualities and weaknesses, oppositions and paradoxes for which she can find no adequate explanation. In the last analysis Bloy is a *puzzle* to her. How explain, she asks, "the peculiar blend of violence and charity, of arrogance and humility, of the ruthless pamphleteer and the devoted man of prayer revealed in the work and person of Leon Bloy?" She accuses him of unbelievable obstinacy, extraordinary vanity.

And yet Bloy rediscovered "the strength and beauty, the ever new and everlasting truth of Christianity." Bloy restored "poverty to its original dignity. . . . He recalled the world to the dignity of the human person which is so often insulted in the poor. . . ." He offered his sufferings for the redemption of souls. He loved Christ and Our Lady profoundly. "Poverty, suffering, penance, and the redemptive power of each, marked his spirituality as one of extreme austerity, but one which was warmed and lightened by the grace of the sacraments regularly received." But "in spite of all this Bloy remains a puzzle." Did not his charity stop short of the banks of the Rhine? And did he not rejoice over the burning of the Charity Bazaar?

Mrs. Dubois' explanation is not a condemnation but an effort to excuse him: Bloy was psychologically unbalanced; his power of intuition was not supported by logical thought. Indeed he was neither a logician nor a philosopher, and he recognized this without regretting it. "He seems to have received gifts of spiritual understanding of unusual richness"; he was at home in the Scriptures; he was a man of fervent and persevering prayer who took the teachings of Christ as his rule of life—yet he does not appear to us "as the saintly person we might expect." In her disappointment Mrs. Dubois goes so far as to find in him "an almost Protestant reliance on private judgment." An assertion obviously not admissible to anybody who has known Leon Bloy personally.

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But here is a reproach of greater significance: "He had no desire for objectivity nor did he care for detail." We shall return to this later. And then "his hatred of pharisaism overshadowed his love of his fellow-men." The excuse here, the explanation that occurs to the author, is that perhaps "his natural temperament was only the outer layer which covered a truly Christian soul." This consideration might constitute part of a more general and more lofty view of the special role to which Leon Bloy was destined. "He brought back to the Church several people who seemed in need precisely of a soul like his, so full of fire, strength and absolute conviction."

I might add that his sense of the ineffable reality of the Church, of her essential purity deriving from her Head, Christ, and from her Inspirer, the Holy Spirit, has made the spiritual children of Leon Bloy attached to the Church in such a way that they have remained able to see also without disturbance—though not without sorrow—the imperfections or deficiencies of her members, as lowly or high up they may be in this world.

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DID the author of the *Portrait of Leon Bloy* depict to us a puzzle in the sense in which this word means riddle, impenetrable obscurity? I should rather think of a puzzle in the sense of a jig-saw puzzle: a unique image is presented all broken into pieces which are queerly shaped, disjointed and thrown about in the greatest disorder; the problem is to re-arrange these pieces and put them where they belong, to recast the image totally and harmoniously.

To those who do not know it in its inmost secrets and the continuity of its development the life of a man inevitably appears as a mass of disjointed and poorly ordered fragments. In analyzing and understanding this life the enigma is greater or less according to the sort of man he is and to his calling. The difficulties are great when his calling is great, how much more so when his calling is exceptional! In the case of Leon Bloy no one can claim to discover the whole mystery of his interior life. But it is proper to make at least the hypothesis which can cover the greatest number of important facts and in the light of which the main direction of that life can be perceived.

The texts I have cited here from Mrs. Dubois' book have shown how considerable is the weight of propitious signs. In *We Have Been Friends Together* I have tried to show the aspect under which Leon Bloy's mission appeared to us from the very first, and Mrs. Dubois has kindly cited several passages from this volume. We heard an echo of the voice of the Prophets in the voice of Leon Bloy. Saint Thomas says that the prophetical function continues to exist, "not indeed with respect to new truths of the faith to be unveiled, but *for the direction of human acts.*" (*Sum. theol.* II-II, q. 174, a. 6, ad 3.) Thus it is that the saints, and the spiritual souls, teach and guide us. The ardent faith of Bloy, afire with the fervor of truth, received illuminations on the spiritual destitution of our times, on the demands God makes, on the role in the Church of the Mother of God, who proclaimed the divine wrath and the divine mercies to our epoch, on the dignity of the poor, on the imminence of punishment, on the necessity for penance.

As the Prophets did, he brought his judgments to bear from above, and he had the ends of salvation and eternity ever before him. *He did not see details,* and he did not have to see them. He did not view daily life except in relationship to eternal life, to God, to His will, and he saw the life of all of us only in relationship to the theological virtues. His mission is exalted and general, and particular facts, however important they may be in themselves, serve for him but as symbols, images and metaphors dealing with ultimate truths; they are only illustrations of a doctrine of truth which is necessary over and above any contingency.

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THAT is why Bloy cannot be reproached for his violence, (and violence was the last thing to bother the Prophets). "My anger is the effervescence of my pity," he said in all truth. Must we now defend him with regard to petty things? Let us say, then, that there was no envy in him; he never fell out with his friends "because of their success"; (he did so sometimes for unimportant reasons misinterpreted by his family). Huysmans he admired and publicly praised; he was full of enthusiasm for the beginnings of *Là-bas,* for the two first sections of the book which appeared in the *Echo de Paris,* and he wrote Huysmans of his "great literary joy" over it. But the rest of the book disappointed and angered him, and he was not alone in this. His break with Huysmans nevertheless did not take place until later; it followed upon several highly unfriendly actions of Huysmans, and Bloy was a long time in perceiving them. Joseph Bollery, in his important book on Bloy's literary beginnings (*Léon Bloy, ses debuts littéraires. Edition Albin Michel.*) is very much to the point on this subject. As to the break between Bloy and Bourget, that was bound to come sooner or later because of the extreme mediocrity of the latter novelist.

It was not an enviable privilege for Bloy to be a prophet in the turmoil of our bourgeois and literary life —and in the nineteenth century! It was good for us to receive his blows, even when mistakenly dealt to certain people—a mistake which had only the appearances of a deliberate injustice.

Hating no one, desiring the salvation of all as does every man who believes in eternal life, Bloy came to give the impression sometimes that he had no love for his neighbor. The style of the Prophets is often rude. Doubtless because they are not called upon to judge any one of us in particular.

Bloy could possibly speak with a certain clumsiness as a writer who makes use of and abuses hyperbole to make himself understood. One of the most terribly harsh things that he wrote deals with the fire at the Charity Bazaar in which many people perished. Surely one

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might have preferred a more theoretical expression of the idea that it is blasphemous to associate the words *bazaar* and *charity,* and that blasphemy deserved fire from Heaven. Yet, despite the style employed, Bloy did not rejoice at the death of the victims; he believed that the justice of God had been manifested; a justice in the visible order which was compatible with the mercy exercized by God in regard to each soul, invisibly. The harshness of Bloy shocks us, but it was directed in actual fact to mere images, detached from the individuality of the real persons to whom compassion goes forth.

Over and above the astonishment and indignation inevitably provoked by Bloy's style, as for example when he condemns "the respectable woman," (and he means the pharisaic woman, not the respectable woman who loves the law of God); over and above his various deficiencies, certain of them only seemingly so—and those which God permits even his saints to have, for the sake of their humility, and which are inseparable from our difficult nature—the profound intuition of Mrs. Dubois has succeeded in transcending the detail and the contingent and in arriving finally at judgments which are almost always fair and just, recognizing the grandeur of Leon Bloy.

Before arriving at her last chapter, which presents the fervent testimony of admirers, friends and spiritual children of Leon Bloy, Mrs. Dubois reaches this conclusion: "He strikes us—if the comparison may be allowed—. . . as rather like Saint John the Baptist, a forerunner, *vox clamantis in deserto,* inheriting some of the character of the Old Testament yet living in the spirit of the New." We thank her for these lines and for her fine book.

The Stage

STALAG 17

THE contemporary theatre has somehow or other lost sight of the value of simple narrative, apparently having bequeathed this virtue to the movies—and now to television—while contenting itself with the pursuit of characterization ("The Autumn Garden") and social investigation ("Darkness at Noon"). We are nowadays pretty superior about 'story-interest,' and a popular novelist and one-time dramatist like Mary Roberts Rinehart feels called upon to apologize for the fact that her only real talent was for plotting. The fact that narrative is the theatre's basic, and really indispensable element, and that it is the one element capable of going it alone when other virtues are absent, is currently illustrated by the Donald Bevan-Edmund Trzcinski "Stalag 17." The authors are lucky indeed to have such good heads for suspenseful story-telling, and it is this quality which enables their play to survive.

"Stalag 17" deals with life in a German prison camp. Its value as social investigation is nil, its characterization is both familiar and superficial, its language is on the whole routine, and its comedy is sometimes thin, sometimes overenthusiastic. But it provides an extremely exciting evening in the theatre. The authors have quite expertly joined three more or less primitive story-drives and played them off against one another: mystery—one of the men in the camp is a German 'plant' whose identity must be uncovered before the Americans are safe to make a move of any kind; escape—one of the Americans must be got out of the camp if he is not to become a victim of the SS; and rejuvenation—the most heartily despised member of the group, and the one most suspected of being the German informer, is the one who is able to unmask the informer and make his fellow-prisoner's escape possible. This is nice plotting: the authors are able to whip up an honest interest in each of their running situations, and the fusion of these situations at the climax creates the kind of theatrical fun we have been sorely missing since the days of William Gillette.

The acting company is fine—I especially liked Harvey Lambeck, Ludwig Roth, Laurence Hugo, and John Ericson—and Jose Ferrer's stage direction has the firm assurance necessary to sustain melodrama of this kind. Since the production opened without benefit of an out-of-town windup, the script can still stand a little trimming and the performances can be better timed, but these are minor flaws in a good show. (*At the 48th St.*)

DREAM GIRL

JUDY HOLLIDAY, currently at the top of the heap, has been so generous in taking on a two-week stand in a popularly-priced theatre that one hates to be ungenerous about her performance. The plain fact of the matter, however, is that she is not well suited to the Elmer Rice comedy, and its revival at City Center is consequently a vast bore. I don't think this is at all the fault of the play; Miss Holliday's range is apparently narrower than most of us had hoped, and she seems as unable to get hold of the intellectual idiosyncrasies of Mr. Rice's heroine as she does to vary the vocal technique which she has until now used so successfully. Two hours of this plaintive small voice—the character is on stage nearly all of the time—is too much; it must be pointed out in Miss Holliday's defense, however, that the cavernous reaches of City Center are no place for this voice, or for the rather intimate play, and that the lumbering stage mechanics put her under the additional strain of having to start the play all over again every five minutes. The actress does succeed in inserting telling bits of business and accurate small reactions here and there; but these are intermittent, and the evening is long.

Don DeFore, returning to the stage after some years in pictures, gives a performance which is amiable enough but is entirely without subtlety. Edmon Ryan and William A. Lee, of the original "Dream Girl" company and no doubt clinging to some of Mr. Rice's original direction, are far and away the happiest members of the cast. (*At City Center*)

WALTER KERR.

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The Screen

"APES AND IVORY, SKULLS AND ROSES"

AND films continue to come from foreign places to enliven our local screens. Not all of them are good, but most of them deserve our attention. Certainly the most praiseworthy of the new imports (from Czechoslovakia, of all places) is *"The Emperor's Nightingale."* Chock-full of fanciful imagery, this is a 78-minute feature film that uses animated puppets to tell the Hans Christian Anderson story about an emperor of China who lives such a life of rigid routine amongst all the artificial, man-made beauties within the court's high walls that he doesn't even know that a real nightingale is in his empire. But even after the real nightingale is captured and sings beautifully of love and freedom, the emperor turns to a mechanical bird that monotonously sings the same song over and over. So wrapped up is the emperor in his world of routine and artificiality that he doesn't notice the real nightingale's escape; but later when the emperor is dying of ennui, the nightingale returns to sing again of freedom and save the emperor from the artificial barriers.

This tale is told within the framework of a dream dreamed by a little boy in real life. He should have been as happy as a king because he has so many fine toys, but living with his great aunts he was lonely beyond endurance and confined by elders' rules. When he became feverishly ill, his little toy Mandarin kept nodding and trying to tell the doctor to listen to the boy's heart, not his head. No medicine was strong enough to dissolve the walls of routine around the boy; and in his dreams the puppets enact the Anderson story.

Even in the real life sequences, "The Emperor's Nightingale" has an extraordinarily lovely dream quality. Beautifully produced and directed by Jiri Trnka, and handsomely photographed in Nu-Agfa Color, this film has been given an English narration for American audiences. Evidently William Snyder, who is releasing the picture here, decided our audiences would need more than just the good musical score that accompanies the visuals, so he wisely hired Phyllis McGinley to write a script. His choice was excellent, for Miss McGinley's narration has a poetic and sophisticated quality that is appropriate to the enchanting tale and keeps its sweetness from getting too cloying. Boris Karloff reads this script well. You may find at times, mainly because it is so long, that "The Emperor's Nightingale" gets a touch precious, but if you take this fable-within-a-fable in the magical mood in which it is told, you will fall under its spell. And you'll probably never see more charming or delicately handled puppets in the movies.

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A HANDSOME import from France is also on our screens, but as you watch *"The Secret of Mayerling"* unfold its extremely complicated story, you realize that elegant sets and costumes are not enough to make a movie move. After its grim opening scenes (with the two shots that kill Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria and his youthful companion Maria Vetsera, and the sombre funeral scenes followed by the haggling over the circumstances of the deaths) the movie settles down to a long and rather tedious flashback giving us the details that led to the murders. According to this new version of the Mayerling tragedy, the answer is murder, not suicide. While the Crown Prince and his mistress did contemplate suicide after he was asked to renounce the throne, this version of the much-argued story has it that Rudolph changed his mind; but on that same night a German assassin killed both of the principals in the case.

I have no axe to grind with the makers of this film on their theories as to what actually happened at Mayerling, but what I have a right to grumble about is that they failed to make an interesting movie with their material. Their greatest error is in failing to make real people of either Rudolph or Maria. As played by Jean Marais, Rudolph is more like a musical-comedy conception of a prince—particularly the rakish sort who is pretty loose with the dames in a series of brawls, but is a mighty fine thinker and certainly advanced for his times in politics. Dominique Blanchar is lovely to look at as the Vetsera girl, but she makes her such a hopelessly silly ninny as a person that she too has no more depth than a musical-comedy character. It is strange that Jean Delannoy who directed such stirring movies as "Symphonie Pastorale" and "God Needs Men," should have done such a stuffy job with such a famous love story. Perhaps when Emperor Franz Josef's letter to the Pope, explaining the whole case, is opened during the next decade or so, we shall get the real low-down on this story. Maybe then the film makers will try again.

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THE English have also sent us an item which gave promise of being something unusual, but I'm sorry to report that *"The Long Dark Hall"* never really comes up to expectations. Its story about a man who is blamed for murdering his mistress is interesting enough, especially with its angle showing the man as happily married. Actually this is not meant to be a mystery: the plot's suspense comes in the gimmick near the finale when we know that the man is innocent of the crime charged against him—but the jury finds him guilty. It is odd that a script written by Nunnally Johnson and acted by such stars as Rex Harrison, as the erring husband, and Lilli Palmer, as the perplexed but forgiving wife, couldn't have been made into a good thriller. But the direction throughout this picture is so stodgy that the film never wakes up to its possibilities. Main interest lies in the relationship between the husband and wife, and even this is not sufficiently motivated to be convincing. Perhaps what "The Long Dark Hall" goes to prove more than anything else is that every English film is not a cerebral world beater.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Communications

Far Eastern Policy

Techny, Illinois

TO THE Editors: May I say how pained I am to read in THE COMMONWEAL (May 11) that in your opinion the "United States was seriously responsible for the downfall of China, so much so that if we had the last six years to live over again, we would do things a lot differently there"—by which I presume you wish to insinuate that the US ought to have bolstered the Chinese Government of Chiang Kai-shek with men and money.

As one who was in China before General Marshall came there, during his stay and after his departure, may I refresh your memory, which seems curiously short.

As for men, it was the time of the "wanna-go-home" stampede, which practically dissolved the American military forces, so much so that a fresh army of occupation for Europe and the Far East had practically to be improvised from raw draftees.

But whether the forces were available or not, the Kuomintang Government would have refused them. The Communists, as usual, made the most of any grievances, actual or imaginary, which the American forces then in China caused. They set up a howl about "American atrocities," a howl dutifully taken up by the whole Kuomintang press. . . . What did the Government of China, the government of our friend and ally, Chiang, do to stop this damnable vilification of the United States? Nothing. Just nothing. Worse than that—it tacitly, if not openly, condoned all this vituperation. Why? Because it did not dare to appear less "patriotic," i.e., less nationalistic, less xenophobe, than its Communist rivals. The only popular appeal in fact which this then already morally bankrupt government could still make was its anti-foreignism—and it was not going to forfeit that at any price. . . .

Send more men to China? Why, we were not even allowed to keep those we had there! With the daily propaganda that America just wanted to reduce China to a Coca-Cola colony of theirs, that China would not allow it, that ugly "incidents" were being plotted—remain in China? Reluctantly, we pulled out. What else could the US do, faced by such an attitude of the Chinese government? Was it to wage war on China, to force its unwanted help upon it? . . .

Such are the "friends" that we are now asked to believe we ought to have helped more. General Marshall, with his shrewdness and sure judgment amounting to genius, soon saw on personal inspection how utterly bankrupt—morally and ideologically—the Kuomintang were and he refused to back a losing horse with the American taxpayer's money.

Instead of pouring more American money down that Kuomintang rat hole, he devised a plan, the Marshall Plan, to aid Europe—a Europe of which at that time it was touch and go for Italy and France to become satellites without Russia having to move a single soldier. General Marshall by his strategy and by his selection of Generals Eisenhower and MacArthur to carry it out, won the war; Mr. Marshall, by his realization of even America's limitations, and his timely decision in China and Europe, has so far prevented our losing the peace.

By their fruits ye shall know them—look at what Europe was six years ago and what it is today. His policy of aiding any country where the government and the majority of the people want to be helped is paying handsome dividends: but Kuomintang China was not like Greece. Even had we only sent further massive shipments of armaments to Chiang, they would merely have been traded to the Communists and helped further to equip them with the latest American arms and accoutrement, as had been the case all along.

". . . if we had to live the last six years over again, we would do things a lot differently" in China. And pray, what would you have done? Or was not Mr. Marshall's foresight perhaps, after all, preferable to your hindsight? Come on now, own up!

H. C. E. ZACHARIAS.

IN TAKING a selective quotation from our editorial, Mr. Zacharias misrepresents our statement, which was as follows: "We are sure that today no American who is honest with himself, whether he is a Democrat or a Republican, will deny that the United States was seriously responsible for the downfall of China, so much so that if we had the last six years to live over again, we would do things a lot differently there." It was not THE COMMONWEAL's intention to claim for itself the wisdom of hindsight; we simply maintained that in the light of what has happened in China, we believe that the majority of the American people today would not care to repeat the mistakes made in China since 1945.

As for what THE COMMONWEAL *would* have done, it is rather a question of what we actually did suggest. We have never favored unconditional aid to Chiang, because we have been well aware of the weakness of his government. We have asked for a program of economic and military aid to the Nationalists allowing for adequate American supervision to see that reforms were carried out, in the hope that the Nationalist Government of China could in time become a free and functioning democracy. There is, of course, no certainty that this would have been successful, due to the many difficulties involved. But just such a program is now being tried in the Philippines, as a result of the report issued by the Treasury Department's Bell Mission which was sent to the islands a few months ago. The Treasury and State Departments made stronger American supervision a condition of aid to the Philippines, despite the Asiatic fear of imperialism, because our Government is determined not to repeat the course of events in China.

General Marshall has testified that, according to General Wedemeyer, it would have taken 10,000 American military personnel alone to supervise properly a program of aid and reform in Nationalist China and, as General Marshall said, we unfortunately did not have the forces to do this. For our postwar demobilization

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and for the lack of interest on the part of the vast majority of Americans in regard to what was going on in China, we feel, as we said, that all of us must take a share of the responsibility for what has happened in China.

THE EDITORS.

Jamestown, N. Y.

TO THE Editors: It was with considerable surprise that I read your sneering and smearing and altogether unworthy attacks upon General MacArthur in your last two issues. For the benefit of Mr. John Cogley who wrote the page of tawdry comment on the "Big Parade," I quote from the editorial page of the Hamilton (Ohio) *Spectator* of May 2:

"We wonder if that great surge of hero-worship (oldest and most profound of man's instincts) was not a reflection on a disturbing weakness in our democratic form of government; a sharp danger signal. People are sick of the evasive, compromising, pussy-footing, popularity-hunting politicians. They have caught on to the fraud of the 'good guy' buying votes with money that in the end must come out of the pockets of the people. They are weary of the 'smart operators' who get by through appeasing all and offending none; who are afraid to speak the truth because it may mean loss of an election. In the end, no matter how clever the analysis of social change, people will recoil from weakness and turn to strength."

A better trained and more comprehensive and less prejudiced mind than that displayed by Mr. Cogley might have observed that the courage, the high principles and fine achievements of this great general were like the first breath of fresh air in many years penetrating a foul and polluted atmosphere which it had seemed to be impossible to ventilate. To term this reaction "flight from reason," and "emotional binge," etc., as you do in an editorial on May 4th is indicative of your own inability to assess the issues raised by MacArthur objectively and with impartiality.

It is rather infuriating to be told that we need now "to hear men and their argument according to a clear head . . ." and to be "calm and judge carefully the testimony" in view of your immediate decision that Truman's summary dismissal of this magnificent leader was not only legal but right. It would have been well for you to have awaited the facts, yourselves, since it has now been shown that not a single insubordinate act was committed by General MacArthur and his contention that he had not only the right but the duty to make known his views to a responsible leader of a large part of the Congress is so impregnated with the principles of democracy and of Americanism that you will hardly have the effrontery to raise that point again.

There is room for differing opinions about the strategy proposed by MacArthur but there should be no room in a journal with some pretensions to intellectualism, patriotism and fair-play to resort to the belittlement of a highly intelligent and great American. The tone of "Big Parade" does just that and does it in a calculated manner, as do some paragraphs of your editorials. A printed apology would be in very good order.

There has been lately in THE COMMONWEAL, and not only in regard to MacArthur, altogether too much and too evident cultivation of a style of writing based on sarcasm and innuendo, as with Mr. Cort, or with Francis Downing, on obscurantism dressing up trivia. While it cannot be assumed from the latter's writings that he has read anything MacArthur has said or written, it is to be hoped that he has done so, however closed his mind to the content, and that he will learn something of clarity of thought and expression, lucidity, and precision of language. And it might be well for the whole editorial department to get out a map of the United States and try to recall its extent and that men from all that vast territory cannot be expected to go on shedding their blood and giving their lives for time without limit in order to procure peace and security, in our time, for the dwellers in the canyons of New York and environs.

DR. A. J. SULLIVAN.

Impeachment Threat

La Crosse, Wisconsin

TO THE Editors: Francis Downing in his article "Republican Impeachment Threat" has my stamp of approval! His logic—his arguments—are unanswerable and I'm pleased that your magazine has the fortitude to stand for principles, as against expediency!

L. M. ENGELHARD.

Stones for Bread

The Vermont Country Store
Weston, Vermont

TO THE Editors: *Re*: Julie Bedier's article in the April 27 issue: I should like to answer the author's final statement that, like the weather, no one is doing anything about making up for the terrible white flour food now on the market.

While what we are doing is infinitesimal compared o the harm being done by the modern milling and baking people, we are indeed doing something in that we have for many years operated an old stone mill, turning out 12 wholegrains and sending them all over the country by mail. Farrar, Straus and Young of New York has just published the first book on wholegrain cooking to come off the press in more than 75 years, and I have the honor to be the writer of the foreword and my wife is the author of the book. A reading of my introduction will clear up a few very minor errors that appear in your article.

For example, millstones grinding slowly and cool do not destroy *any* vitamins. The bran does *not* contain most of the vitamins and minerals . . . the bran contains 2% and the germ contains about 90%, a point your author misses. The fundamental reason why stoneground wholegrains do not keep is because the oil of the germ turns rancid in a warm kitchen if kept several weeks.

VREST ORTON.

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Christianity in the Orient

By MAX FISCHER

THE CHRISTIAN missionaries who went to Asia came into countries that already had a high intellectual and artistic civilization, basically different in many respects from that of the Occident. The eternal truth of Christianity is, of course, catholic, and that means that it can be expressed in the material forms of any civilization. But to distinguish between the eternal message of the glad tidings and the specific forms of expression that message received in Western civilization, demands an analytic power and a creative imagination that are not often combined in one person. No doubt, the efforts to bring Christianity to the old civilizations of Asia were blocked by the difficulties the Asiatic people had in finding eternal truth in the manifestations of a highly different civilization such as that of the West, and in the inability of many brave missionaries to translate their religious message into foreign patterns of expression. This may be the reason why the Christian missioners worked much more successfully among the uneducated lower strata of Oriental society than with the learned and cultured.

An outstanding exception were the Jesuit missionaries of the seventeenth century, both in India and in China. They undertook a serious study of the native religious and secular traditions, and tried to adapt the Christian teachings to the specific emotional and cultural features of the nations they wanted to convert. Unfortunately, this far-sighted policy was blocked by the protests of other religious orders who sent up the cry of heresy. The inner disagreement about technique in the Catholic missions undermined, of course, the missionaries' efforts and provided the secular authorities with reasons to stop missionary activities.

The present Asiatic crisis brings this old problem to the fore again and stresses the fact that understanding the Oriental mind is the presupposition for a more successful expansion of Christianity. If the Christian faith is to become a force in the East, this will have to be achieved within the culture of the educated classes, as a continuation of their traditions in a new vein. And it must be done under the direction of missionaries who have a deep love and an insight into Asiatic ways of emotion and thought.

★

THIS often-forgotten truism is the *leitmotiv* of the very impressive book that Father H. van Straelen,

---

MAX FISCHER, a former Far Eastern correspondent, is now on the faculty of The New School for Social Research in New York.

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S.V.D. has published under the title, *Through Eastern Eyes* (Grailville, $3.50). It is based on a thorough study of the problems involved and the author's long experience as a missioner in Japan. The book is the result of conferences given at the Lay Mission School in Grailville, Loveland, Ohio. It is a good comment on this school that lectures of such a high level could be presented to the young women who are prepared there for active service in the mission lands.

Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen has written an introduction to this book in which he says that to him it was a most shocking sight to see Gothic churches in Canton and other ancient Oriental cities, as they represent the importation of an art alien to Far Eastern people who had an art and culture of their own thousands of years before the Occident's Gothic style was developed. "Anyone who has dealt with pagan souls," Msgr. Sheen claims, "knows that the best approach is to make use of the good that is in them."

Perhaps the greatest emphasis on this point is given by the illustrations in this book, representing religious works of Oriental art that compare very favorably with the standards of Occidental religious art in our time. We see buildings, sculptures and paintings in which a still living tradition of Eastern art is enriched by Christian faith and emotions, and the eternal symbols of Christianity receive new intensity through their being blended with the art expression of not yet Christianized civilizations. The churches in native style from the island of Floris in Indonesia represent an unusual but most beautiful kind of Christian church. The regal majesty of Christ and of the Queen of Heaven in a wood sculpture of Java is a merging of a highly developed native tradition and Christian conceptions. Still more interesting, perhaps, is the virile figure of an angel lost in meditation. He sits in the traditional Javanese position, but his face bears an expression of active intensity that is definitely Christian, not Hindu or Buddhist.

One of the most important concrete steps toward the development of such an Oriental expression of Christianity is, of course, the formation of a native clergy and hierarchy. In asking for this development Father van Straelen comes back to the old motto of the first Jesuit missionaries in China: "to hasten the conversion of China by the Chinese." The greatest need, it seems to him, is to find native philosophers among the Christians of Asia who will express the eternal truth in terms of their own intellectual traditions. He thinks also that our liturgy is too much influenced by Western ways of life and that a special Far Eastern rite is needed.

★

THAT such thoughts are not at all heretical may be assumed as evident from Pope Pius XII's allocution to the newly created cardinals in 1946: "The Catholic Church watches man's every heartbeat and is alive to the just aspirations of all nations and all races. She watches without pause the divinely guided course of circumstances; when these circumstances have become clear, the Church steps in, adapts or accommodates according to the needs of the times."

Father van Straelen stresses it as the weakness of previous missionary efforts that they so often alienated the converts from their own civilization, instead of leading them to a greater dedication to their own country. This is the crucial point that Gandhi, who was so much impressed by Christian emotions and thoughts, criticized in the Christian converts of India: "I see them almost ashamed of their birth. . . . The aping of Europeans on the part of Anglo-Indians is bad enough, but the aping of them by converts from India is a violence done to their country and even to their new religion." From this point of view the author gives many practical suggestions for the missions and the lay apostolate in the Orient.

It seems to me that the present crisis in Asia is mostly caused by the destruction of the old traditions that gave support and dignity to the individual. The shattering of the Oriental mind by the sudden repudiation of millenia-old forms of life, has uprooted the nations of the East and made them an easy prey for Bolshevist propaganda. Christians were short-sighted when they welcomed the collapse of the Chinese empire and other ancient Oriental institutions. They were wrong when they hoped for a good catch from among those who had supposedly repudiated their "pagan traditions." By the debunking of their own civilization men became empty and vainglorious. Christian forces cannot work in a cultural void. The medieval, Occidental civilizations emerged with the Christianization of nations which carried on their specific qualities and built upon their pre-Christian traditions. Similarly the Christianization of Asia on a great scale can only be achieved if the cultural heritage of her nations is blended with the new spiritual way, adding creative new chapters to their cultural continuity. Father van Straelen's book and its illustrations are an affirmation that such possibilities may be realized.

Korean Relief

DR. Young Tai Pyun, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, now in the United States, recently appealed to Americans to send CARE packages to "save millions of Koreans who otherwise are doomed to perish." The Minister is appearing at a series of meetings in support of the CARE-for-Korea program, through which contributions sent to CARE, 20 Broad Street, New York City, or any of the agency's local offices, are used to provide clothing, textile, blankets and food packages to Korean war refugees and other needy civilians.

The CARE packages, prepared to meet specific Korean needs, include: cotton textiles, woolen blanket, $7 each; underwear, woolen suiting, food, $10 each; knitting wool, $13. Contributions less than the cost of a complete parcel are pooled.

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Books

Insurrection. Liam O'Flaherty. Little, Brown. $3.

IF YOU are up to another novel of the Easter Rebellion, you are likely to find Liam O'Flaherty's new one very exciting indeed. After a somewhat forced beginning the narrative quickly takes hold and thereafter moves tensely and rapidly to its inevitable conclusion. It also finds time enroute for two absorbing characterizations of intellectuals on the firing line: Kinsella, the school teacher turned commander, and Stapleton, the poet for whom battle is a mystical experience. Mr. O'Flaherty's principal character, Bartly Madden, is less interesting, belonging as he does to the bewildered brute school of hero who can find his own raison d'etre only in fanatical devotion to a leader and for whom battle is little more than the release of a blood lust. Since he is not of the stature of the other men, and because we are far more fascinated by their civilized and complex reactions to the situation than by his primitive and rather familiar responses, the book is occasionally thrown out of balance. This is particularly true of its ending, wherein the author pursues Madden through the final spasms of his animal rage and exultation. We would rather have shared the ultimate experiences of either of the other men, and, though the author is clearly completing the book in the focus he originally intended, for us it seems to end on a tangent.

I think you will find the book good reading. My most serious complaint cannot be lodged against O'Flaherty directly, only against the truncated form of the modern novel generally. *Insurrection* seems to me to be a piece of a novel—honestly observed, sharply written, entirely alive, but, in final effect, oblique and fragmentary. There is a big book to be made out of the materials, a book which will organize and relate every side of the experience, as though the separate intuitions of *Insurrection, The Informer,* and one or two other slight novels were to be pulled into a rounded and meaningful pattern. Magnitude is a characteristic virtue of the form, and I am not certain why modern writing is so loath, or so unable, to pursue it. It is not at all impossible that O'Flaherty should write a book of real dimension, and his expenditure of first-rate narrative talent on these severely limited side-views seems to me something of a waste.

WALTER KERR.

The Welfare State: A Mortgage on America's Future. Jules Abels. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. $3.

THE purpose of this book is to point out the evils of the welfare state, which the author defines so broadly that it includes almost all the activities of Truman's Fair Deal. According to Mr. Abels the proper agenda for the federal government is the limited activities and objectives of the early New Deal. Since the 1934 budget expended seven billion dollars and normal Fair Deal budgets have run forty to fifty billions, most of the activities of the Administration in the domestic field are characterized as "welfare." The results of this pursuit of "welfare" are identified as chronic inflation and the hamstringing of free enterprise with a consequent deterioration of economic progress.

Mr. Abels' broad definition of the welfare state leads him to condemn as unwise a wide range of government activities undertaken since 1934. Although these are not all given individual analysis, he does mention specifically river valley development on the TVA pattern, and this will serve as an illustration of the inadequacy of his standard for determining proper governmental activities.

It is not inconsistent to argue both that the maintenance of free enterprise should be a primary public policy and that some economic activities are better handled by public than private administration. Under present day conditions river valley development is such an activity. Privately owned electric utilities in building dams must protect their stockholders and cannot require them to assume the costs of other services needed by the inhabitants of the valley, such as flood control, navigation and soil conservation. The author has slighted many scholarly contributions on methods of determining appropriate governmental intervention in a free economy and offers little that is new or valuable in solving this problem.

The author is on surer ground in describing the monetary and fiscal climate of the Fair Deal. He characterizes this as chronic inflation and emphasizes its significance in deciding what functions the government should undertake in such times. In these recent years the public has suffered from a depression "hangover," incorrectly supposing that the threat is a renewal of deflation rather than the inflation that exists. This encourages over-spending and under-taxing by government. While agreeing with the validity of this analysis, one can reasonably differ with the author's thesis that the welfare state caused the inflation. More important as a causal factor was the public's desire to spend too freely in both the public and private sectors.

The jacket describes the book as "without political bias of any kind." If the publishers had discovered such a book on current political problems, it would be worth noting. The bias of this book is anti-Administration.

WILLIAM F. KENNEDY.

The Foundling. Francis Cardinal Spellman. Scribners. $2.75.

THE Cardinal's book amounts largely to a sympathetic report on, and tribute to, the work done by Catholic nuns at the New York Foundling Hospital (which will receive all the royalties) and similar

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institutions throughout the country. It is also a heartfelt plea for a greater spirit of personal charity in the world and an exaltation of inter-group, inter-racial and inter-religious tolerance in the United States. Its distinguished author, putting the words in the mouth of a young nun, at one point vigorously distinguishes between genuine tolerance and religious indifferentism or dogmatic wishy-washiness, but leaves no room for doubt about his belief in the American ideal of persons of all races, nationalities and religions living together in peace and working together in harmony.

"Why did I write *The Foundling*?" The Cardinal answers this question in the current issue of *Wings*, the Literary Guild Review. ". . . the telling might well be in one simple sentence: I wrote *The Foundling* because I had to write it, for it was born in the womb of my intellect and given birth by the love of my heart for little children and for all mankind!"

The story is about Peter Lane, left as a baby in the Crib at a Catholic cathedral during Christmastide, 1918. The child is found by a young man newly returned from the great war, a badly scarred young veteran who left an arm behind him in France. He brings the baby to the Sisters at the foundling home. Under the care of nuns, and always close to the man who found him in the cathedral, the boy grows up, to serve in the Pacific during World War II, to become himself blinded by enemy action and finally to be launched on what promises to be a successful musical career, which might not have been without the early encouragement of a gifted nun. This, of course, is only the bare outline. *The Foundling* clearly relies more strongly on its overly neat plot than on characterization.

Merely considered on its literary merits, Cardinal Spellman's novel is undistinguished. It represents the efforts of a well-intentioned amateur to use the novel form for purposes which, I'm afraid this book proves again, are better served by the pulpit or platform. As novelist, Cardinal Spellman, so highly gifted with other talents, displays, at best, mediocre ability. The human figures in *The Foundling* remain to the last idealized types rather than living people: the grateful orphan, an All-American kid, and his noble little Negro sidekick; the young veteran, man of good will, bearing courageously the scars of war service, and his good wife; the devoted nuns, cheerfully and completely dedicated to other people's children; the benign and gracious Bishop; the virtuous young lady who wins Peter's heart forever, etc. The characters lack individuality and as human beings fail to convince. Their piety goes unquestioned and forever remains unquestioning. By and large, theirs is the psychology of characters in women's magazine fiction: prompt and unfailing obedience to plot considerations. The master of the contrived ending says Come, and they cometh; he says Go, and they goeth. It was a formula used in pious Catholic magazine fiction for many years even before

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Faith Baldwin became a literary light. Many Catholics, I fear, will be somewhat disconcerted to find it here revived. Others will welcome the Cardinal's novel for the light it sheds on his own generous spirit and enthusiastic Americanism and for the interest it will provoke, undoubtedly, in the good work done at numerous foundling hospitals and orphanages throughout the country. But the man who sets out to review it as a novel has only one choice and that is to say that as a novel it isn't very good; in fact it's pretty bad by almost any literary standard.

JOHN COGLEY.

The Sacred River. An Approach to James Joyce. L. A. G. Strong. Pellegrini & Cudahy. $2.75.

IN VIEW of the appearance of this book by L. A. G. Strong the question can be raised whether comment on the work of James Joyce has not had its possibilities already exhausted. In a word, what more is there to be said? Harry Levin's book, and that effort to explore the esotericism of *Finnegan's Wake, The Skeleton Key* by Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson, would seem to have ended the search for clues to the meaning of this enigmatic writer.

There is still nothing like proof, moreover, that the search for meaning, in *Finnegan's Wake* at least, does more than make us victims of perversity, of a pleasure in confusing the already confused with a murky symbolism. It must all now seem, in the historical, political verities that surround us, to be a part of the vanishing surface brilliancy that characterized the painting art of the School of Paris in the period between the two World Wars. While the latter can be defended because painting is a matter of pattern in which color is an integrated factor, and therefore one may have that sensuous delight in non-representative art one derives from pattern in tiles, rugs, or other things, the same cannot be said of literature, for in that case a content should be discernible.

The nature of the literary medium requires of it the communication of ideas or, at least, suggestive clues to them such as showed in Joyce's *Ulysses*. The rare music of words, sans perceptible meaning, in which *Finnegan's Wake* abounds, can only end by being a superior type of soporific. The intellectual and artistic background existed in Joyce. The existence of a valid, profound content of adequate type has scarcely been demonstrated.

This, of course, particularly refers to *Finnegan's Wake* whereas Mr. Strong's book, like Mr. Levin's, is more comprehensive and gives a view of all of Joyce's work against the background of his personality. In this it has value although the investigation of the symbolic obscurities of *Finnegan's Wake* is in line with what was rather exhaustively done in the Campbell-Robinson *Skeleton Key*.

Mr. Strong's standing as a poet, critic and Dubliner well fits him

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with the discernment necessary for the task he undertakes in *The Sacred River*. Were I convinced of the value of Joyce's experiments in the effort to evolve a literary treatment, at once timeless and allied with the age, I might view the entirety of this book with more interest. As it is, the time appears to have moved away from Joyce and his timelessness still remains the product of partisan conjecture. BARRY BYRNE.

Rain On The Wind. Walter Macken. Macmillan. $3.

HERE is a very Irish novel, loaded with Irish virtues and Irish vices. It is a story of the sea and of real men who drag their livlihood out of it with fishing nets, and their tensions are tensions the reader can share. Mr. Macken's book has the solid Irish virtue of telling and timing a story well, of putting a lilt in language; its genuine tang of Irish air and Irish rock and Irish sea give the story the reality it has.

Unfortunately, the novel is marred by a solid Irish Puritanism that keeps its reality on the rocks and in the minor characters. It fosters a peculiar Irish notion that all intellectual aspiration is probably the work of pride and the devil and the boys in the pub are the salt of the earth after all. This makes *Rain on the Wind* a novel whose unreal women are only surpassed by the unreality of the conflict between the fisherman hero and his intellectual brother. Since the physical is fine and accepted, the hero is able to wade through some of the sentimentality that surrounds him; but since the intellect is shunned the villain is drowned as a character in the beginning, so the conflict remains theoretical. Moreover, the Joyce-like qualities of the intellectual open Mr. Macken to the suspicion that he was boxing out of his division. What is worse, near the end of the book, he seems to be swinging wild and, in the tradition of the worst Victorians, he tries to pull the book out by throwing into life a black and white Providence, the clarity of which is not only an insult to the human need for faith, but gives the novel an air of blarney where conviction was intended.

The story telling keeps the book a good night's reading, the blarney will keep it from being remembered long. EDMUND NAUGHTON.

• REVIEWERS •

WILLIAM F. KENNEDY is an assistant professor of Economics at the University of California, Santa Barbara College.

BARRY BYRNE is a noted American architect, now living in Chicago.

EDMUND NAUGHTON is a graduate student at Fordham.

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A Point of View IX

Grass Roots Education

THE Church has been able in the past to give renewed energy to dying societies. Within its fold there is an infinite possibility of life, and this life shows itself in new ideas, new energies, new institutions and new ideals which proceed from it to affect the secular society. Christian civilization is not a steady progress but an exciting series of renewals after everything is all but lost.

There are signs all around us of a great awakening. There is Spring in the air. There is life stirring. It is stirring in the field of education. There are many young people ready to graduate from college who are eager to start something new. They are willing to make sacrifices and to make them for true Christian education. They are looking for places to start. It would be a disaster if places were not offered.

For it may be that it is by education that the Church will revitalize our dying society and thus win it to herself. If we Catholics furnish the leadership in restoring the ideals of Christian civilization to the people of this century, they will not be ungrateful. But we can furnish this leadership only at the grass roots, only by setting up institutions which will become a vital and organic part of the local community, so that all men can see that what we stand for is of supreme value. We have not done this yet in the modern world. It is high time to start something.

WILLIS D. NUTTING in The Commonweal, April 14, 1950.

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